

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 NIC-01 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01

OMB-01 DRC-01 /195 W

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R 062000Z NOV 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5618

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 4175

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ES, HO

SUBJECT: PROPOSALS TO ESTABLISH ADVISORY GROUP ON

HONDURAS/EL SALVADOR NEGOTIATIONS

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 4036, 4088 AND 4123

BEGIN SUMMARY: A PROPOSAL HAS BEEN MADE BY THE LIBERAL PARTY TO SET UP A GROUP TO ADVISE THE GOVERNMENT DURING THE PRESENT HONDURAS/ EL SALVADOR NEGOTIATIONS. IN ADDITION, ANOTHER PARTY (PINU) HAS BROACHED THE IDEA OF HOLDING A PLEBISCITE TO APPROVE THE RESULTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. MINLAB FONSECA RECENTLY STATED TO A MISSION OFFICER THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF CONVOKING A CONSULTATIVE GROUP (A KIND OF ESTATES-GENERAL) WITHOUT POLITICAL PARTY PARTICIPATION TO APPROVE THE NEGOTIATION RESULT. END SUMMARY.

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1. THE LIBERAL PARTY RECENTLY PRESENTED A MEMORANDUM TO CHIEF

OF STATE LOPEZ EXPRESSING GRAVE CONCERN ABOUT THE PROGRESS OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH EL SALVADOR AND STATING THAT HONDURAN PARTICIPATION IN THE TALKS DOES NOT REST UPON CONSULTATION WITH THE PEOPLE. MEMORANDUM PROPOSES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A "COMMISSION FOR DEFENSE OF THE NATIONAL TERRITORY" COMPOSED OF THE OUTSTANDING LEADERS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES, UNIONS, PRIVATE SECTOR, PROFESSIONAL BODIES, THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY AND THE ARMED FORCES. LIBERAL LEADERS CLAIM THAT LOPEZ CANNOT NEGOTIATE A SETTLEMENT OF THE FRONTIER QUESTION WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF THE HONDURAN PEOPLE AND THAT THE CREATION OF SUCH A GROUP WOULD AT LEAST INSURE PUBLIC OPINION IS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT ON SUCH A MATTER OF VITAL CONCERN.

2. THE INNOVATION AND UNITY PARTY (PINU) ALSO ISSUED A PUBLIC DECLARATION IN WHICH IT EMPHASIZED THE HISTORIC NATURE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. THE DECLARATION STATED THAT THE RESULTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD BE BASED ON THE SOVEREIGN WILL OF THE HONDURAN PEOPLE, BUT POINTED OUT THAT THE FORMATION OF A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY TO CONSIDER AND APPROVE OR DISAPPROVE THE EVENTUAL TREATY WOULD BE AFFLICTED BY TRADITIONAL PARTISANSHIP. IT THEREFORE PROPOSED THAT THE RESULTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BE SUBMITTED TO THE PEOPLE IN A PLEBISCITE.

3. IN A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH USAID DIRECTOR MINLAB FONSECA STATED THAT HE AND FONMIN BATRES HAD BEEN CONSIDERING SECRETLY TWO POSSIBLE WAYS OF "RATIFYING" THE RESULTS OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. THE FIRST ALTERNATIVE IS A PLEBISCITE WHICH FONSECA RECOGNIZED WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO MANAGE. THE SECOND ALTERNATIVE WOULD BE THE CREATION OF A CONSULTATIVE BODY MADE UP OF THE ELECTED MEMBERS OF VARIOUS SECTORS OF HONDURAN SOCIETY (I.E. LABOR, COMMERCE, INDUSTRY, CAMPESENO ORGANIZATIONS, MILITARY, ETC.). EACH SECTOR WOULD ELECT ITS OWN REPRESENTATIVE AND WOULD HAVE A VOICE IN THE CONSULTATIVE BODY EQUIVALENT TO ITS PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION. THE POLITICAL PARTIES, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT BE REPRESENTED.

4. COMMENT: THE LIBERAL PARTY PROPOSAL APPEALS TO ALL MANNER OF DISSIDENTS AND OPPONENTS OF THE LOPEZ REGIME. THE LIBERALS THEMSELVES BELIEVE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ADVISORY GROUP WOULD BE A WEDGE IN THE DOOR LOOKING TOWARD THE FORMATION OF A
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CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY. IN THEIR VIEW SUCH AN ASSEMBLY WOULD TERMINATE THE PRESENT MILITARY REGIME AND REINSTATE CONSTITUTIONAL RULE. LOPEZ, IN HIS RECENT CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR, STATED THAT HE IS NOT SYMPATHETIC TO THE LIBERAL PROPOSAL. THE HOLDING OF A PLEBISCITE WOULD ALSO SEEM HIGHLY UNLIKELY GIVEN THE PROBABILITY THAT LOPEZ' ENEMIES WOULD UTILIZE IT TO DISCREDIT THE GOVERNMENT BY CLAIMING THAT THE TREATIES, HOWEVER GOOD, WERE A "SELL-OUT." THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CONSULTATIVE BODY

OR ESTATES-GENERAL COMPOSED OF ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY MAY BE AN EFFORT ON THE PART OF FONSECA AND OTHER CABINET MINISTERS SUCH AS BATRES AND FINANCE MINISTER ACOSTA TO FORMALIZE A CORPORATIVIST STATE CONCEPT. CERTAINLY THEY HAVE BEEN INTERESTED IN SUCH A CONCEPT IN THE PAST AND IT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING IF THEY ARE DEVELOPING SUCH A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE. FURTHERMORE, LOPEZ IS PROBABLY THINKING OF HOLDING A CONSULTATIVE ASSEMBLY IN THE FUTURE TO RESTORE CONSTITUTIONAL LEGITIMACY AND THE FORMATION OF SUCH AN ASSEMBLY COULD WELL INVOLVE THE PARTICIPATION OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES. IT IS LIKELY THAT FONSECA, BATRES AND ACOSTA ARE AWARE OF HIS THINKING AND WANT TO FORESTALL SUCH A MOVE INVOLVING A RETURN TO POLITICAL PARTY ACTIVITY BY FLOATING THE ALTERNATIVE IDEA OF SOME KIND OF ESTATES-GENERAL.
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